

## **Workplace Traffic Safety**

*This is Road-Safe Workplace, an electronic newsletter about workplace traffic safety from the Vermont Department of Labor because the number one cause of death and injury in the workplace are traffic crashes. Road-Safe Workplace has been created to distribute statistics, facts, and other materials to help employers create, maintain and improve their workplace traffic safety programs. Please use this information in your company newsletters, bulletin boards, or employee e-mail memos. Your thoughts and comments are always welcome. However, if you do not wish to receive Road-Safe Workplace, please reply with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.*



## **Vermont Lags Behind National Average on Seat Belt Use**

Seat belt use in Vermont dropped six and a half percentage points in the past year according to an observational survey conducted by Oman Analytics for the Vermont Center for Justice Research at Norwich University. A pre-mobilization survey, conducted in April 2006, based on standards set forth by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), found that 78.2% of Vermonters used seat belts in their motor vehicles. This compares to 84.7% who used seat belts in June of 2005, immediately following the 2005 Click It or Ticket Program. Meanwhile NHTSA said that seat belt use nationwide is pegged at 82%.

NHTSA also found that 54% of passenger vehicle occupants who were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2005 were not belted. According to NHTSA, men account for 65% of the more than 31,000 people killed each in motor vehicles. 58% of those killed who were not wearing a seat belt crashed on rural roads. In crashes involving pickup trucks, about seven in ten people who died in the crash were not belted and more than six in ten people age 8 to 44 killed in crashes were not buckled up.

Traffic safety experts say that seat belts will reduce the risk of death for front seat occupants by 45% and reduce the risk of moderate-to-critical injuries by at least half. In addition, experts say that the fatality risk for front-seat occupants in SUVs, pickup trucks and vans who are belted is reduced by 60% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injuries is reduced by 65%.

Businesses who deliver products and services can reduce their cost of doing business by simply establishing and enforcing a seat belt policy. For more information contact Project Road-Safe (contact information at the end of this newsletter). Incidentally, 20 years ago, in 1985, the seat belt use rate was 18.1%. It has taken a generation for motorists to realize the benefits of seat belt use. Of course, in the past 10 years, the numbers of vehicles on the roads have increased 60%, while new roads have increased 6%. It's getting to be a tight squeeze on our highways, all the more reason to be safe. And, the most significant way to be safe is:

**Buckle Up – Pay Attention – Slow Down**

## Pay Attention to Your Driving

In the last Project Road-Safe Electronic Newsletter, we shared a study that confirmed that "inattention" is the major cause of traffic deaths.

The issue of "inattention" will become a major issue between those who want to keep drivers safe on our highways and the free enterprise system of advertising products and services. The following articles clearly demonstrate that issue.

## Some States May Limit On-Board Video Use

Several states are considering legislation related to driver distractions, with particular focus on video screens in vehicles. A bill in the New York Senate would forbid drivers from watching video screens while behind the wheel. In Alaska, legislators approved a bill that would forbid drivers from watching television or video monitors while the vehicle is moving. The measure calls for stiffer penalties if the driver causes a crash that kills or injures another person.

## GPS Turned Mobile Commercial

Many people find global positioning systems a great navigational tool behind the wheel. And now marketers are finding new ways to reach an audience using the devices. Kenneth Hein, in **BRANDWEEK**, reports that during the past two months, Dunkin' Donuts, Cold Stone Creamery and others began appearing on in-car GPS devices to alert drivers to nearby locations and, in some cases, offer special deals. Proponents say this form of media has a special edge: "Not only can GPS devices tell you how to get there, they can tell you where to go," said Samir Bhavnani, director of research with Current Analysis, San Diego. Media buyers have also taken notice. "There are a lot of great applications, especially in the quick service restaurant category," said Sharon Hatch, vp/director of out-of-home at Horizon Media, New York.

Seizing the opportunity to talk to consumers on the go via their GPS devices, Dunkin' Brands inked a first-of-its-kind licensing agreement in February with the trendy No. 2 manufacturer TomTom. Under the agreement, users can download the Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin Robbins logos onto their devices so they can easily spot the popular chains when they are on the road. Typically restaurants are shown using a standard knife and fork icon. The TomTom systems, which begin at \$699, can also be programmed so that drivers are alerted, via a flashing icon or a beep, as they approach a local Dunkin' or Baskin outlet. Other GPS manufacturers are looking at a wide range of marketing opportunities from ice cream to shoes.

Overall, the category is attracting some powerful players. Google recently joined with Volkswagen to offer Google maps on its pre-installed GPS systems, and AOL will offer Mapquest as a service for GPS-enabled cell phones.

However, these devices and others could serve as a distraction, prompting the Consumer Electronics Assn. to launch its "Watch the Road" campaign next month.

## 10 Worst Foods To Eat While Driving

And, wouldn't you know it. Not only is eating a drinking a major driving distraction, someone has taken upon themselves to also tell you about the 10 worst foods to eat while you are engaged in distracted eating and drinking.

Hagerty Insurance has revealed the "10 Most Dangerous Foods To Eat While Driving." Researchers rated common foods eaten in cars according to the degree of distraction, degree of difficulty in eating with only one hand on the wheel, and the food's popularity. The top 10 foods include:

1. Coffee
2. Hot soups
3. Tacos
4. Chili
5. Burgers
6. Barbequed foods
7. Fried chicken
8. Jelly or cream-filled doughnuts
9. Soft drinks
10. Chocolate

## Employer Guidebook to Reduce Traffic Crashes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) have joined forces to create the 32-page ***Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes***, featuring a 10-step program outlining what an employer can do to improve traffic safety performance and minimize the risk of motor vehicle crashes. The document includes success stories from employers who have benefited from effective driver safety programs, including Pike Industries with operations in Vermont.

The booklet is available to employers from: [njames@labor.state.vt.us](mailto:njames@labor.state.vt.us). Ask for the *Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes*. The booklet will be sent in the mail, so be sure to include your mailing address.

***Inattention, speed, driving while impaired, disregard for stop signs and traffic lights, and failure to yield the right of way are the major causes of crashes on our highways.***



**REMEMBER -- BUCKLE YOUR SEATBELT  
EVERY TIME!**